

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

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Introduction

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) is a global network of organizations that work together to provide shared communications services in humanitarian emergencies.

Staff from all humanitarian organizations can use ETC services, regardless of membership. Representatives from aid organizations interested in participating in inter-agency ICT services and information-sharing can attend local working group meetings.

ETC activities are field-driven, with plans and projects reviewed and endorsed by local working groups.

Services

Within 48 hours of a disaster, the ETC provides vital security communications services and voice and internet connectivity to assist humanitarian workers in their life-saving operations. Within four weeks, ETC services are expanded for continued emergency relief.

Services are deployed in defined 'common operational areas', i.e. areas approved by the Humanitarian Country Team in which the majority of UN agencies & NGOs are based.

The ETC provides the following services in emergencies:

- *Voice and Data Communications services*
 - Shared wireless internet connectivity from 'hotspot'
 - Basic voice telephony
- *Security Communications services*
 - Two-way VHF radio networks to cover common operational areas
 - Security compliant Communications Centres (COMCENs)
 - Radio frequency and call-sign coordination
 - Training of radio operations and users.
- *Customer Support services*
 - Help desk for technical assistance
 - Basic printing, copying, scanning
 - Charging capability.
- *Coordination services*
 - Liaison with government authorities for ETC related matters
 - Development of all project related documents
 - Regular meetings and collaboration with existing groups
 - Transition to post-emergency / reconstruction phase.
- *Information Management services*
 - Dedicated ETC information-sharing and collaboration platform
 - Standards for common ICT equipment and procedures
 - Platform for directory services containing contact information
 - Standardized and interoperable platforms and procedures.

Communications services provided by the ETC in the different phases of an emergency operation are outlined in the [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster Service Catalogue](#).

Leadership

The World Food Programme (WFP) is nominated global lead of the ETC, responsible for building strong relationships with the partner network and for ensuring predictable and effective inter-agency response.

To enhance response predictability, WFP is also normally the lead organization at the country level. The ETC country lead has responsibility for coordinating the deployment and implementation of security communications and internet connectivity services and also must fulfill the role of 'Provider of Last Resort'.

In close collaboration with the ETC network of partners, WFP is coordinating ETC 2020 efforts which will see the cluster evolve from being primarily a service provider, to broker, facilitator and convenor of technology in emergency response.

Contact Information

For more information about the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), visit: www.ETCluster.org or email: Global.ETC@wfp.org

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